No. 100 Contents

ABSA Research Grants...... Capertee Valley Nat. Park..... Grey Falcon 'Endangered ' in NSW..... Blood Sampling..... White-bellied Sea-eagle.... Secret Songs..... Tillegra Dam, NSW..... Indonesian Bird Banding Scheme..... Rufous Scrub-bird Surveys..... World Bird Names.... Lazy Crows..... Newsletter Number 1, June 1984.....

FROM THE PRESIDENT

So, we have reached 100 issues! I salute the first Editor, Darryl Smedley, and congratulate the Association on passing this milestone. I note the plea for member input into the Newsletter content, and happily welcome two articles in this issue from members.

We remind those who supervise students that Corella is an ideal place for publication of articles based on Honours theses, and we encourage you to consider Corella when advising students.

Advance notice is given that the first issue of Corella in 2011 will be another special issue - on Rare Raptors. *Stein Boddington*

COMMITTEE POSITIONS FILLED

Jeff hardy has accepted the position of Vice-President of the Association, and Jo Dessman has taken on the role of Secretary, after their election to the Committee this year.

WALLY KLAU AWARDED OAM

Congratulations to Wally Klau, ABSA member who was awarded an OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, for his tireless work, particularly around Gluepot Station in South Australia.

THANKS

A big thankyou to Helen Aston who passed on to the Association an almost complete set of Newsletters, including the first edition noted elsewhere in this issue.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Before we even finalised the draft strategic plan, many of its ideas have been put into action. You have seen the improvements in Corella, with the use of colour photos, thicker, more glossy paper, and a series of special issues.

The Newsletter has had its own makeover, and members have communicated their approval to the Committee.

And now, a string of training courses for people wanting to move up from just looking at birds, has been organised in conjunction with BASNA, and already commenced. These courses aim to give attendees basic education in field studies and techniques. They include sessions on anatomy, on behaviour, on banding, on observation, and on the scientific method. After many years of familiarity, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that scientific thinking and ways of organising information, theories and data are new to those who have not had contact with the hard side of birding. There are also a set of ethics to be taught, covering science as a discipline, as well as more specific birding ethics.

The hope is that some of the trainees will develop both an interest and an aptitude for more formal studies, and go on to join the banding / research community - and perhaps even become members of ABSA!

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH GRANTS 2010/11

The Australian Bird Study Association operates a fund to provide financial assistance to researchers. The fund, known as the ABSA Fund for Avian Research, provides grants on an annual basis. The total value of grants this year is in the order of \$1000 and is intended to provide researchers with assistance in the acquisition of equipment and research material.

Expressions of interest for obtaining a grant are now being sought from members of the Association. The Association would like to encourage grant applications from both amateur and professional researchers. Expressions of interest must be in writing, clearly setting out the aims and objectives of the proposed study.

The successful recipients would be encouraged, at the completion of their study, to provide a paper for publication in Corella outlining the results of their research.

All applications should be forwarded by 31 Oct 2010 to: The Secretary, Australian Bird Study Association, PO Box A313, Sydney South, NSW 1235.

'BEST PRACTICE' BLOOD SAMPLING APPARENTLY DOES NOT HARM WILD BIRDS

(Alan.Lill@monash.edu) Alan Lill Blood samples are used to answer a variety of research questions about wild birds. For example, they are employed to measure circulating reproductive and stress hormone concentrations, collect DNA for sex and paternity determination, measure metabolic fuel levels, examine immune competence and track emerging infectious diseases, such as malaria. Such data are very important in understanding basic avian biology, as well as in bird conservation and even human health. Guidelines on how to safely sample the blood of wild birds have been published by Gaunt et al. (1997). Birds probably experience some minor, short-term distress from being captured and bled, but from an ethical standpoint the critical issue is whether carefully conducted blood-sampling has long-term, negative impacts on birds' growth, breeding and survival. Sheldon et al. (2008) have recently published an interesting paper investigating this question by conducting rigourous field experiments on three terrestrial bird species and reviewing the literature on this issue.

In the first experiment, they took blood samples from the brachial vein (under the wing) of breeding, adult Buffbreasted Wrens mist-netted in Panama. The volume of blood collected (30 or 200 microlitres) did not affect the birds' annual survival and the reproductive success of pairs that had been bled one to three times during the breeding season was similar to that of control pairs that had not been bled in the previous five years. In the second field experiment, bleeding nestling Smooth-billed Anis in Puerto Rico from the femoral (leg) or jugular (neck) veins did not impair growth (mass gain) relative to that of control nestlings of the same age from the same nest that were handled, but not bled. In the final experiment on European starlings in Canada, blood sampling from the jugular, but not the brachial, vein negatively affected young nestlings' body condition (determined from their mass and morphometrics, such as wing and metatarsus length). However, the effect was transient and not evident eight days later. Fledging success was unaffected by bloodsampling.

A review of studies of adults of 39 other species in seven bird orders revealed no effects of blood-sampling on a diverse suite of traits, including annual survival, reproductive behaviour and success, parenting, territory defence and body mass. Fewer studies have been published on nestlings, but a review of investigations of seven other species in five orders revealed only one minor effect of blood-sampling on nestling growth and survival.

Sheldon et al.'s paper indicates strongly that bloodsampling using 'best practice' methods causes no longterm, adverse effects for wild adult and nestling birds. This means that researchers carefully following the established ethical guidelines on blood-collection from wild birds can continue to make an important contribution to avian biology and conservation.

References:

Gaunt, A. S., Oring, L.W., Able, K. P., Anderson, D.W., Baptista, L.F., Barlow, J.C. and Wingfield, J.C. (eds). (1997) *Guidelines to the use of wild birds in research*. The Ornithological Council, Washington, D.C.

Sheldon, L.D., Chin, E.H., Gill, S.A., Schmaltz, G., Newman, A.E.M. and Soma, K.K. (2008) Effects of blood collection on wild birds: an update. *Journal of Avian Biology* 39: 369-378.

CAPERTEE VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Recently the 800th National Park in NSW was declared, preserving a vital breeding area for the critically endangered Regent Honey-eater. The 2,800 Hectare property "Port Macquarie" in the Capertee Valley was purchased for \$4 million by the NSW Government, with assistance of almost \$2.7 million from the Australian Government's Caring for Country initiative.

The Capertee Valley lies on the eastern side of the Blue Mountains, north of Lithgow. It is an area of flattish land largely cleared for agriculture, surrounded by an escarpment of spectacular sandstone cliffs.

It is the most reliable of only three core breeding areas for the Regent Honeyeater, and has been the site of extensive replanting of food trees by volunteer groups from Sydney, under the supervision of the NSW National Parks Regent Honeyeater recovery team. The property is a haven for many woodland birds, with other threatened species present including the Diamond Firetail, Hooded Robin, Turquoise Parrot and Barking Owl.

The park also contains more than 350 hectares of nationally significant critically endangered white box/yellow box-Blakeley's red gum grassy woodland and is the habitat of several threatened plants.

The tourist infrastructure was created largely in response to the tree-planters, the birdwatchers and the researchers frequenting the area. The area is already renowned among local and overseas birdwatchers, and is expected to draw people from all over the world.

GREY FALCON ON ENDANGERED LIST, NSW

The NSW Scientific Committee has determined that the Grey Falcon - *Falco hypoleucos* be listed as endangered in NSW. The website of the Scientific Committee has the following information:

What needs to be done to recover this species?

- Retain existing habitat and manage grazing to ensure habitat features are protected.
- Protect and rehabilitate habitat along watercourses.
- Monitor known nesting sites to deter poachers.
- Monitor secondary poisoning from mouse or locust control. Inform DEC if any unusual species mortality occurs.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLES AT SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

In April 2009 Birds Australia Southern NSW & ACT (BASNA) in collaboration with Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) and with technical expertise and finance from a number of volunteers placed a CCTV camera high in a tree overlooking a White-bellied Sea-eagle nest within Sydney Olympic Park. The video from the camera provided a detailed insight into the nest renovation and incubation activities of the eagles during May/June 2009. Unfortunately, this camera was soon ruined by ants. A replacement camera was organized but because the eagles had already started their nesting activities it could not be installed in the original camera's position, so it was placed at some distance from the nest at ground level. This camera provided a limited but nevertheless interesting perspective into the nestling stage of the nesting, with an eaglet fledging in November 2009. We learned a great deal from the footage including details of male/female workloads in rebuilding the nest, the extent of pair-bonding during incubation and the parental investment and behaviour in raising the chick.

This year, we have installed 3 CCTV cameras (suitably antproofed) one of these a high-definition (HD) camera. We believe it is one of the first times that a HD camera is being used in an raptor monitoring project anywhere in the world. The cameras are not intrusively positioned directly above the nest but further away to give a wide angle of view. The HD camera, when zoomed, provides a more detailed view into the nest than conventional nest-cams. One benefit already seen is the ability to identify species of fish brought to the nest. This project is designed to obtain a near complete record (daylight hours) of the behaviour of White-bellied Sea-eagles at their nest, from May until November. The advantage of this system is that it is relatively unobtrusive. There is no need for an observer to be present near the nest during the nesting period as all video is sent back to the office and is recorded automatically for later analysis.

Your Help Needed!

As part of the study it will be important to manually catalogue as much detail as possible of the eagles' activities away from the nest in and around Sydney Olympic Park and along Parramatta River. This information can only come from casual observation, in taking photos or in making notes of the eagles' activities. If anybody is interested in helping out this year in regard to supplying observations of the eagles away from the nest during this period, please contact us directly.

All photos of any sea-eagles in the Sydney area will be extremely useful in the study. Photos taken by digital cameras are preferred as they have the date/time recorded within the image file. All images (with the location) would be gratefully received. None of the collected images will be published or displayed as they will only be used in the study database.

Also of importance will be mapping the eagles' home range and territorial boundaries. To this end, it will be useful to obtain photographs of any sea-eagles seen in the greater Sydney region (within a 50km radius of Sydney Olympic Park). The extent and pattern of white streaking in the underside of the flight feathers (particularly on young birds), the presence/absence of white terminal bands on the under-wing primary coverts along with wear and damage to the outer flight feathers (later in the season) is a reliable identification feature of individuals. The Homebush eagles are likely to maintain a territory that extends the length of the Parramatta River but they may range a lot further than this; at present we do not know. Submitted photographs could then determine the eagles' range and also the ranges of the surrounding sea-eagle populations that occasionally come into the territory of the Homebush pair. Any additional information such as records of nesting and juvenile birds would also be gratefully received.

Geoff Hutchinson (BASNA) <ghutcho@yahoo.com>

SECRET SONGS - THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF BIRDSONG REVEALED

Birdsong is beautiful, but it is almost impossible for the human ear to distinguish the wealth of hidden notes and melodies. A new CD from the British Library plays original recordings alongside digitally mastered versions where the speed has been slowed to reveal the subtle intricacy of each song in its full glory.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/ aug/31/secret-bird-song-british-library

TILLEGRA DAM - WILL IT DAMAGE WETLANDS

The State Government in NSW is intent on going ahead with the controversial Tillegra Dam in the Hunter Valley.

However, recent findings by Professor Richard Kingsford of NSW University, suggest that the Hunter Water Corporation used inaccurate calculations and may have underestimated the impact of the dam on one of Australia's most important bird-breeding wetlands in the hunter estuary. HWC originally claimed minimal impact downstream from the dam, estimated to cost \$477 million.

"This was incorrect because the environmental assessment used annual averages and had little consideration of cumulative environmental impacts and likely ecological consequences" said Prof. Kingsford's report. "We showed that there may be considerable reductions in flow to the estuary, affecting the RAMSAR site and migratory shorebirds and their habitats, when data was analysed at the monthly and daily scale."

The dam plan is currently before the federal Environment Minister.

AUSTRALIAN BIRDS IN AUSTRALIAN CULTURE

Gill Ainsworth is still seeking volunteers to assist with her project on the value of birds in Australian culture (see article in Newsletter 98 [March 2010].) All details on the website below.

Gill Ainsworth <gill.ainsworth@cdu.edu.au> or phone: 08 8946 6413.

Find out more about the Social Values of Australian Threatened Birds project: http://www.cdu.edu.au/ser/ profiles/GillAinsworthProfile.htm>



THE INDONESIAN BIRD BANDING SCHEME (IBBS)

David Drynan and Alan Leishman

The IBBS has been established using funding obtained through AusAID's Public Sector Linkages Program (PSLP). This program is designed to facilitate capacity building in Government departments in developing countries. One of the main objectives of the program is to establish the skills and capacity in the Indonesian Government so that effective monitoring of Avian Influenza can be undertaken. Banding birds that are part of an AI monitoring program is critical to its success, so it was logical to take this one step further and establish a national banding scheme for Indonesia.

The funding was obtained after David Drynan prepared the application paperwork to make a strong case to establish the IBBS. This was done with the support of Dr Dewi Prawiradilaga from the Research Centre for Biology, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (RCB-LIPI). Dr Prawiradilaga did her PhD at ANU on Pied Currawongs with Dr Rob Magrath on an AusAID scholarship

Banding in Indonesia has been done in the past using bands from Australia, the UK, the USA, Japan and possibly more that we don't know about. The data has not been stored in a central database, and much may have been lost. Having band size standards, properly trained personnel and a



central repository for banding data will enhance Indonesia's capacity for research into their largely unstudied avifauna.

The program so far has delivered two training courses (one in Java, one in Bali), with a third course being prepared for November in Java. The IBBS now has ample stocks of suitable bands and will shortly have the computing facilities to store and analyse the data. It is hoped that the program will be finished in 2011.

The practical part of the program (ie bander training) involved two training sessions, the first in montane forest at Gunung Halimun National Park, Java in July 2009 and the second in Bali during April 2010. The three areas that were used in Bali were Eke Karya Botanic Gardens in the Bali



highlands and on the coast close to Denpasar at the Pemukhnan Bungung "Lagoon" (sewerage works) and the Mangrove Centre Boardwalk. The Lagoon and Boardwalk proved to be the most productive in numbers of birds caught. A highlight was the capture and banding of 52 Small Blue Kingfishers *Alcedo coerulescens* in four days of netting. This enabled all the trainees to gain experience in the application of K bands.

Experienced banders from Australia who acted as trainers at these two sessions were Mark Clayton (ACT), Alan Leishman (NSW) Richard Noske (NT) and Bill Rutherford (WA) all ably led and organised by David Drynan of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes.

The two training sessions demonstrated their own unique problems and successes. Mist netting in montane forest usually results in a low catch rate although the species caught are generally of great interest. Areas had to be found where there was suitable accommodation for the large group attending the training sessions. These areas also had to provide suitable habitats to ensure a catch rate high enough to enable training to be continued throughout the day. This was difficult as sites had to be arranged prior to leaving Australia.

Many of the trainees were highly skilled in mist netting and banding and for them the training was generally centred on increasing their skills in activities such as recording of moult, plumage descriptions for both juvenile, immature and adult birds, breeding characteristics and understanding the need to prepare descriptions and publications to assist future banders in the ageing and sexing of the large number of avian species that occur in Indonesia.

We found the two training sessions to be of great interest although challenging at times. The Indonesian trainees were enthusiastic and willing learners, and they eagerly seek additional information such as publications that we in Australia take for granted.

2010 Rufous Scrub-bird Surveys & Volunteer Training

Help the recovery of the threatened Rufous Scrub-bird by getting involved in surveys that will help assess its current status. Five Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been designated for the Rufous Scrub-bird, four of them in NSW and one on the NSW Queensland border. Beginning this September, surveys will be undertaken in the Barrington Tops & Gloucester Tops IBA, the New England IBA, the Gibraltar IBA, the Scenic Rim IBA and the Werrikimbe IBA. If you live in or near any of those IBAs, or you'd like to help out with the surveys, or be involved in other ways, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteers are needed for all Rufous Scrub-bird IBA surveys, and training is available for all observers. An initial training campout and survey at Barrington Tops in NSW is being organised by Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC), trialling methodology based on earlier work, the Birds Australia IBA project and the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW). The training campout/survey and follow up survey at Gloucester Tops are happening on September 15-17 and October 11-13. Surveys at other locations are planned.

The birding groups and DECCW staff who are organising the surveys would love your help. Come along and participate in the surveys, or provide logistical support.

What do you need to take part? For field surveys, we need people with some time, a degree of physical fitness and good bird identification skills. CDs with Rufous Scrub-bird calls will be provided for everyone who participates, so you don't need to be immediately familiar with the (very loud!) calls of this famous mimic.

If you are Interested please contact Peter Marsh Phone: 02 9810 4264 Mobile: 0414 810 426

WORLD BIRD NAMES

Version 2.4 of the List of World Bird Names has been published online for those who are interested. Done by the International Ornithologists Union, it replaces the book "BIRDS OF THE WORLD *Recommended English Names*" By Frank Gill and Minturn Wright.

[I was unable to confirm if it follows Christidis and Boles, the bible of bird nomenclature in Australia. If it does, good. If it doesn't, lets stick to C&B, and use this for other countries' birds.- Ed]

http://www.worldbirdnames.org/

Gill, F. & D. Donsker (Eds). 2010. IOC World Bird Names (version 2.5). Available at <www.worldbirdnames.org> [Accessed "8 September 2010"].

LAZY CROWS USEFUL AFTER ALL

In research undertaken in northern Spain, evolutionary biologist Vittorio Baglione at the University of Valladolid in Palencia and others studied family groups of Carrion Crows (*Corvus corone*) that tolerate so-called lazy members in their family, who did not assist in feeding young, as was thought to be the price for membership of a co-operative family group. This has been one of the many dilemmas in understanding the evolutionary basis for cooperative behaviour in birds.

However, when a feeding bird had its wings clipped, and reduced its feeding duties by up to 30%, the biggest change was that a large proportion of the 'lazy' members started to feed the young. It was not known if this was because they responded to the hungry chicks cries, or were forced to do so by more dominant crows.



Ref: Baglione, V. *et al. Proc. R. Soc. B* doi:10.1098/rspb. 2010.0745

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 1 JUNE 1984

I thought it would be of interest to include some of the very first Newsletter published by ABSA. Many of the people mentioned are still active in Australian ornithology. There is also some interesting history about the early days eg the origin of the MIst Net Service.- Ed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

First I would like to thank all those members who submitted replies to the questionnaire on the Newsletter proposal. The remarks of those who were in favour but concerned about the workload, were very much appreciated by the Committee.

When the Bird Banders' Association of Australia (BBAA) was formed in 1962, those present at the time expressed the hope that a newsletter would eventually be issued. The BBAA became the Australian Bird Study Association (ABSA) in 1977 and now we have our first Newsletter. The Annual General Meeting, by a small majority, endorsed the introduction of the Newsletter this year. The support from those who returned the questionnaire was strongly in favour, particularly so from country and interstate members.

Some members expressed concern at the growing number of organisation each with its own newsletter, and each involving extra cost. Nevertheless, there is some material which is better suited to a newsletter than the regular journal. Most of the remarks indicated that a newsletter would help to keep contact with members, and it is hoped that this will be the case. Accordingly, you are invited to submit material for inclusion. The success will depend on the support of members and the receipt of material. The Editor will include items from the Committee. To avoid additional cost, the Newsletter will be forwarded with regular issues of "Corella" but not necessarily with each one.

Some members have indicated a misunderstanding of the role of the ABSA. It is a national association, formed with the prime task of publishing material on bird study in this country. It is not a club, nor is it in competition with regional groups carrying out that role. It has attained recognition both throughout Australia and overseas for the standard of its ornithological publications.

I hope you will find the Newsletter helpful and interesting and that you will continue to get pleasure and satisfaction from your ornithological activities.

Bill Lane - President

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

As we go to press, we are pleased to inform members that Darryl Smedley has been appointed Newsletter Editor by the Committee. We thank Darryl for taking on the task and hope he will have a satisfying time in the position.

THE AUSTRALIAN BIRD-BANDING SCHEME

On 1 July 1984 the Australian Bird-Banding Scheme will come under the control of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service after more than 30 years with the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Rangelands Research.

The importance of the role played in Australian ornithological science by the CSIRO through the establishment and operation of the scheme has been

recognised by amateur and professional researchers throughout the world.

Members will regret the decision of the Executive of the CSIRO which resulted in the transfer. However, we look forward to an equally satisfactory relationship with the "New Management" as that which occurred with CSIRO over the years.

REGIONAL		ORGANISERS,	AUSTRA	ALIAN	BIRD-
BAND	ING SC	CHEME			
S.A.	Max	Watermen	NSW	Bill La	ine
ACT	Steve	Wilson	TAS	Bob G	reen

Qld

John Liddy

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Perry de Rebeira

Colour Banding of Caspian Terns - Jenny Hawkins, NZ

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo - Jill McLean, Vic.

Raptor Collisions with Utility Lines - Dr R.(Butch) Olendorff, USA

Pacific Gull Banding - Bruce Robertson, Vic

HONOURED

W.A.

The Australia Day Honours List included the name of one of our members. Mr Arnold R. McGill, FRZS, FRAOU who received the award of the Order of Australia Medal for 50 years service to ornithology at a presentation held at Government House, Sydney on 4 May 1984.....

PERSONAL PARS

It has been reported that the waders of Stockton NSW had a New Year Party when they learned about a certain "bearded gent" leaving the area. They haven't yet realised that they may again "fall into his clutches" on their travels, though now a bit further north.

Anyway Fred, you will be missed at Newcastle and your friends "down south" can imagine you in your element among the waders at Darwin - but watch out for crocs in your mist nets.

(Fred van Gessel became a casualty of the steel industry recession at Newcastle but is now working in Darwin.) Good luck Fred and we will be expecting some wader banding news from there in the future.

THE MIST NET SERVICE

Last year Dawn Cameron "retired" as Secretary of the Mist Net Service after nine years in that position. At the AGM last December, our president expressed to Dawn sincere thanks on behalf of all members for her long and dedicated service in a task which demands considerable time and effort. The Association was fortunate indeed that Wendy Filewood offered to take on the task. Probably few members would know that the Mist Net Service was commenced in 1962 by Steve Wilson, under the name of The Central Bird Banding Association. Handling of mist nets was the sole purpose of that Association which was subsequently absorbed in a "takeover" by the Bird Banders' Association of Australia.

In the 22 years since its inception, there have been only three secretaries - Steve Wilson 1962 - 1973, Dawn Cameron 1974 - 1983 and Wendy Filewood 1983 to date.

CURRENT ORNITHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND STUDY PROJECTS

Darryl Jones: Australian Brush Turkey. Behavioural ecology. The project is based in a series of rainforest remnants at My Tambourine, near brisbane.

Dr Richard Zann: Zebra Finch. Population biology, social structures, mating systems, moult patterns, feeding ecology, vocalizations and behaviour. On farmland in Northern Victoria.

[members will remember that Dr Zann, together with his wife and daughter, was killed in the Victorian bushfire disaster in February 2009 - Ed.]

Geoffrey C. Smith: Black-naped Tern and Crested tern. Population ecology, feeding and breeding biology. Near Lizard island, Great Barrier Reef.



Photo Titles

An Immature Banded Broadbill, Indonesia (see following story).

Small Blue Kingfisher, Indonesia

Trainers and Trainees in Indonesia. David Drynan and Alan Leishman are at front right.

Adult Blue-eared Kingfisher, Indonesia

Mark Clayton and Blue Whistling Thrush, Indonesia